



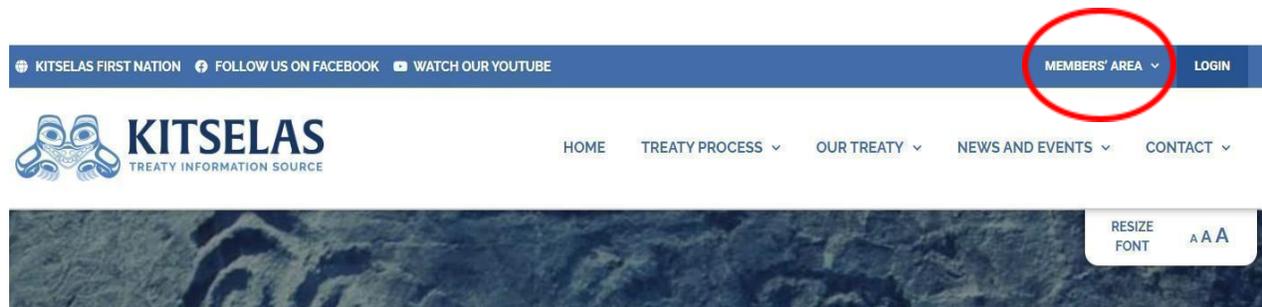
TREATY: INCREASING ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE PEOPLE | SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

Thank you to the Kitselas Members who joined us for our fourteenth Treaty Information Session community meeting at the Kitselas Administration Building in person and via Zoom on September 28, 2022. Everyone is welcome at Treaty Information Sessions.

Below are the Q&A, and comments from the meeting.

The next community meeting is on Wednesday, October 26, 2022, 6pm

The recording of the September 28 community meeting is available in the **Member's Area** of the www.kitselastreaty.ca website. Please register to access this area:



[Member] Comment – [Speaking about the ability to enforce laws after Treaty] That's the reason why we should do our own enforcement if provincial services won't.

Comment – Trusts are not limited to being implemented under a treaty. There has been work by previous Chief and Councils to implement trusts to protect the community.

Q – Re: responsibility of Chief and Council, particularly financial accountability]. We have seen past Chief and Councils demolish or ignore our laws. How is this going to be prevented under a treaty? Is it still possible that it could happen again under a treaty?

A – I cannot speak of previous Chiefs and Councils, but a Kitselas Constitution and Treaty will legally compel Chief and Council to make various laws and enforce them. A Kitselas Court will ensure that these laws are enforced. This protects our community.

Can this accountability be circumvented? If no one complains, nothing will be done. The Treaty can only create powers that the people, Kitselas Government, and elected leadership can use to hold each other accountable. The people have to accept

responsibility to do this, too. Treaty can only provide the power; the hard work of using it remains. It is easy to say something is unacceptable, but Treaty gives us the power to be heard and to have our concerns addressed.

Comment – *I believe that our Treaty is not written in stone, so changes can be made as needed – called Periodic Renewal.*

Something that is important to the people, our history goes back 5,000 years, and it is important that the Hereditary names be acknowledged. It is important that these names be referenced in the Treaty. I have spoken to Mel, and we live in a democracy. The name of Satsan (Mel's name) is a ceremonial name. Our history is in these names. They cannot be forgotten, because we cannot forget our history. In other Tsimshian communities, there is a common name that is in every community—Gitxon. That name originated in Kitselas, at the fortress. Gaum is another name that is important and cannot be forgotten. We have to continue lifting the name up and continue talking about it.

People had to pay a toll to pass through the Canyon, and that was our form of economy. There were five villages in the Canyon of our people (Gitsaex, the Paul Mason site, and others). They are important, and the reference needs to be in our Treaty, so that the federal government acknowledges that we had a history and a form of government before Canada existed. It is all in our oral history, and it is only in the last century that it has been written. It is in the local school curriculum, and this, like the Men of Medeek, is important that people know about it. We need to ensure that people know about our history, right to New Town. The Big Canyon (the Macrae) family, speaks about the Kitselas People. This needs to be revitalized and remembered.

The People of the Canyon were not liked because we enforced the toll at the Canyon. If people didn't pay, they could pass through.

I really hope that we can reference the Hereditary Names and our history in the Treaty. Other Nations want to claim our names. But we have to stand them up and ensure that our history is known. We lift up the names through the feasting house when someone passes away. But we have to make sure that this continues. We cannot forget this, and make sure it is part of the Treaty. Even so we reference it, so people know about it.

We can see the replicas of the totem poles. They are preserved at the museum in Ottawa. My father-in-law, Ralph Wright, talked about the petroglyph. It should have slid into the water. The Museum of Man lifted it up and protected it. All of this is important and needs to be brought back. I feel that we don't have to rush into the Treaty. I feel we have to take our time to make sure we get it right.

You can look at all of the programs and services that we have. For example, the Health Building, which is a beautiful building. We have to ensure that we do it right.

I'm all for preserving our history. We can't let our history and our Hereditary Names die. We have to protect them. We have a strong foothold. We have to look at revitalizing Gitaus, like Barkerville, to ensure that it is remembered. We can't forget Tsunyaw, that it was desecrated by the CN, where our mortuary poles and grave sites were moved. Back then, they didn't feel they had to consult with First Nations. Thank you, Mel, David, and

your staff, but we have to ensure that our history is documented and remembered and acknowledged in the Treaty.

Comment – *I support what Glenn has said. Something that popped up that we need and need to put money into is to put Elders and people with information on our territories, to sit down and identify and clarify what Houses people should be in. I see that people take Houses and try to be part of Houses that they should not be a part of. Once you change this, a person changes the course of history. We follow what our mothers and elders have taught us...*

We really need to get a Research Department going, so that when we get to Treaty. We have this information ready so that it continues. There is so much to think about as we get ready for a Treaty.

Re- RCMP and police services - In Vancouver, we can see that there is a Vancouver police service as well as the RCMP. Once we have a constitution, it cannot be changed. There is a difficult process to change anything in the Constitution and something that the majority of people vote in favour of a change. And how we wanted to be managed and policed, this still has to be clarified through the Constitution.

I really hope that somebody will take the lead and get us together to start talking about the history, our lineage, and our names. The totem poles come from across the Canyon. People don't know this. We need to do research. When Treaty negotiations started, the late Winnie Wells would get information from many places. In the information she shared with me, there was a Wolf clan, and three clans underneath it—those binders had so much about our Houses. If we had a research team, we would be on the right track to having our government follow the Clan system after Treaty, how we wish to be governed

Comment – *I learned a lot about the names in Lax Kw'alaams. There, people with high names can go to the meetings and are informed. Here, everyone is informed about the meetings, not just the leaders in the community. If a person with a high name in Lax Kw'alaams, cannot make the meeting, their names are read out. Matriarchs are also named in the meetings.*

It was Paul Mason who shared information about the villages and how they were run. I think I've mentioned in the past that all of the villages should be noted, so that we understand the connections. I mention Lax Kw'alaams, because that is where my mom was from, and she had a high name. People would phone her and Ralph (Wright), if they wanted information; they didn't need to go to the meetings. The true names of the villages, Gitaus and Kulspai, my mother and Ralph knew these names. It was quicker for us to say Kulspai. But the Indian name would be difficult for the non-Indigenous people to say it. I used to talk a lot with Ralph and that's how I learned a lot. Also, with my auntie from Port Simpson. She was originally from Kitselas, and she would tell me a lot about the Kitselas villages because that's where I'm from.

I didn't have a tape, but I should have had a tape to record and remember. Because I was younger, in my 20s, and didn't pay attention and I regret it. I thought I'd mentioned what he said about the Chiefs. They had newspapers about the meetings, but they informed all the names. If you have a High Chief name, you would never know.

Comment – Glenn spoke about Helen MacCrae. Her family had a homestead in the valley. They had an old valley road that would go through. I also noticed in the paper today, the people running for the City leadership. There is a good bit of information there. It said in the paper, who would be responsible for what areas. I don't know what they are involved in land claims now. We need to make sure these people are informed too.

A – We work very hard to inform people of all meetings, available in person or on Zoom.

Comment – Thank you for the presentations, but when we talk about the Regional District, this includes 18 First Nations. Bruce Bidgood is the current Regional District elected official for Gitau.

Q – With regards to the traditional naming, are you familiar with the work done with the Elders in the past? Will this be looked at again? If we were to get a Cultural (Research) Coordinator, will this be a part of the Treaty? Is this work of looking at our names and Hereditary Names being continued now? Is this information available to people now? How was this information shared now? How will we recognize the names and the sm'oogyit and sigidmna'ax from other communities, to ensure that we show respect? We need to learn and make sure that younger generations learn.

What do we have from the Men of Medeek, so that we have the names documented. How do we pass on that knowledge to our next generation who are at meetings and who want to learn from Elders to carry on our history? We know there has been work, but are not sure where this work is stored by Kitselas Administration. How do we release it to our people, so that they can learn?

If we want this in the Constitution, then we need to ensure that we have the Traditional Knowledge either in the Constitution or in a separate document that outlines the wilp so that everything is ready for people to learn about it.

A – Treaty, gives us the right to protect and follow our history and culture, in any way we wish to. I know that many names and stories were shared at the Headstone Feast for Merle.

Ultimately Treaty is not the place to document our history. The people need to ask Chief and Council to create or direct a new or existing department to undertake this extensive work—probably a genealogist (someone who studies people's history). We can do that now or after Treaty—it's our choice.

I think the Health Department organized the last Elders' Gathering at a cost of around \$300,000. Frankly, I don't know of any information on Kitselas names in the Treaty office.

We have copies of the Men of Medeek book in our office for sale or reference. If you cannot afford one, please just let one of our staff know.

Comment – *It's always been a Hereditary system for who is Kitselas. We go by who is our matriarchal family, and we go by our Chief system. My brother is Nisdahok. We are not involved in Clan business; we are not consulted. I just want to make sure it is fair who is being consulted and who is sharing information about the history*

A – We work hard to inform the community about every Treaty event and information session. We have an extensive list of every single Kitselas Member whose information we have. If you can provide your brother's contact information to the Treaty staff, we will ensure he is on, or added, to our mailing lists.